

A N C P I

S T E L O F M D

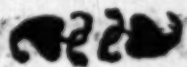
the learnig, sent by saint Vul-
dericus, Bisschoppe of Augusta,
called Augsburgh, unto Ni-
colas Byschoppe of Ro-
me, the fyrst of that na-
me: agaynst the vn-
maried Chastitie
of Pryestes.

¶



UNTO ALL AS

hys lord and father, and moost
bygylant Prouisor of the ho-
lye Church of Rome, Bulderi-
cus by name onelye a Bys-
shoppe, oweth Loue as
his sonne or chylde,
and feare as hys
seruaunt.



Her as I haue chaũ-
ced of late dayes to
fynde your decrees,
sent ouer vnto me,
made byppō the cō-
tynence of Cler-
kes or Preeestes, to be farre a-
alienate from dyscretion: a cer-
tayne feare truelye with sor-
rowe dyd bere me: feare, be-
cause of that, where it is sayd
that the sentence of a Pastor is
to be dredde ande feared, whe-

a ii ther

ther it be Just or vniust. Tru-
lye I feared the weake and feble
hearers of y^e scriptur, y^e which
scant whear a Just cause is, do
obeye y^e Sentence of it, a moch
moze y^e vniust they treade vnder
fote, least those shulde blide the
selues by a Precepte of theyr
owne free wyll, thzough the o-
nerous and impoztable trans-
gresse or vlsurpig of theyr Pas-
tor. And sorowe, trulye and
pytpe it was vnto me, whyles
I doubted howe the membz
shulde be ware of them selues,
theyr heade beyng taken in so
greuous a syckenes. For what
can be moze weightie, or what
moze woorthy then the pitpe or
compassyon of the whole Chur-
che. Ande theryn you the Bys-
shoppe of the hyghest seate (vn-
to whome apparteyneth the ex-
amynatyon of the whole Chur-
che) to straine neuer so litell ou-
te

te of the waye, from the holpe.
Discretion: Ande truelye you
haue gone not a lytell out of
the waye. when that you wyl-
led the Clerckes or Priestes
(whome you ought to moue to
contynence of wedlocke) to be
compelled vnto the same by a
certeyne Imperious violence.
Why is not thys (thynke youe)
iustly by the common Judge-
ment of all wyle men a violen-
ce, when contrarie to the insti-
tutio of the Gospell, and agaiſt
the decree of y^e Holy Goost, any
Man is compelled to execute
pryuate decrees: Where ther-
fore many holpe examples are
of the Olde ande Newe Testa-
ment (as you knowe) that teach
Discretion. Lett it not be
(I praye youe) greuous vnto
your Fatherhod, a fewe of the,
amongest many, to be graffed
a iii and

& intermixed i this litell boke.
The Lorde of truth in the olde
lawe hath appoynted vnto a
Pyest wedlocke, the whych is
not redde where afterward he
hath forbydden the same: But
he sayth in the Gospell. Math.
xix. There are some gelded par
sons that haue chastysed them
selues for the kingdom of hea
uen: But all men vnderstand
not thys sayinge, let him take
it that maye take it. Wherefore
the Apostell sayth. i. Corin. vii.
I haue no pcept of the Lord
for byrgnes, but I giue them
my counsell. Whereby thou doest
consyder accordyng to the for
mer saying of the Lorde, that
all can not take thys counsell.
But thou seest many flaterers
of the said counsell, that are wil
ling to please men and not God,
to commytt manny greuous
thynges vnder theyr colour of
con-

contynence, to vse vnlaufflie
the fathers wyues, and not to
abhorre from the embzasyng
of the male kinde, and of Beas-
tes. Least therfore the estate of
the whole congregatyon maye
chaunce to be to moch weak-
ned, by the castyng aboute of
thys infyrmytpe, growynge e-
uen vnto a very plague: Becau-
se of fornycatyon (sayde he) let
euery man haue his owne wy-
fe. The whych these ypocrytes
faine to parteyne specialie vn-
to laye men. The whych albeyt
that they be constytuted in ne-
uer so holie an order, yet doub-
te they not in dede to abuse o-
ther mennes wyues. And (the
whych we see not without tea-
res) all men rage in the aboue-
named mischeues. Cruellie tho-
se haue not vnderstand the scrip-
tures a ryght, oute of whose
pappes (because they haue pres-
sed

sed the to harde) they haue dzo
ken bloude in the steade of myl
ke. For that saynige of the
Apostell, let euery manne ha
ue hys owne wyfe, doth trulpe
except no man, sauing the pzo
fessour of contynencie (oz hym
that hath prescribed in the lord
to contynewe in hys byrgynp
tye. The whyche thyng (moost
reuerēde father) doth become
your mighty power, that whe
re any shalbe, & shal make vnto
you by hand oz by mouth, anye
bowe of chastitie, and afterwar
des wyll forsake it, to bynde &
same of duety to execute the sa
me bowe, oz to depose the same
oute of all orders by your Ca
nonycall auctorite: ande that
you maie be able, manly to ful
fyll the same, you shal haue me
and all other men of my callige
to be vnto you dilygēt ayders.
But to the intēt that you may
knowe

knowe that soch as knowe of
no soche bowe, are not to be cō-
pelled: heare the Apostell spea-
kyng vnto Tymothe: sayinge,
It becometh a Bisshoppe to be
irepzehenible, the husband of
one wyfe. And because that no
man shulde retorne the same sē-
tence to the Church alone, he
added vnto it. He truelye ꝑ can
not gouerne his owne house,
howe shall the same giue dilige-
ce vnto the Church of God? Ly-
ke wyse he sayth, let Deacons
be husbandes of one wyfe, the
whyche can well gouerne their
chylderen and houses. And ve-
rely I knowe, that you are suf-
ficiently taught, by the holy
decrees, of the holie Bisshoppe
Syluester: that ꝑ myfe is bles-
sed by the Priest. Vnto these
ande soch lyke sentences of the
Scripture, the wyter of the
rule of Priestes or Clerkes,
accoz

accoꝝdige, not without cause,
saythe, a pꝛyeste oughte to be
chaste, oꝛ at the least fettered
wyth the bond of one Maꝛry-
monye. Of the whych thinges,
he doth trulye gather, þat a Bys-
shop and deacon, are noted to be
woꝛthy blame, yf they be deu-
ded in manye women. Ande yf
they refuse one, vnder pꝛetence
of religion: Here the canonicall
sentence doth condempne both
Bysshop and deacon, wythout
differēce of degrees. A Bysshop
oꝛ Pꝛyest ought not to cast of
his proper wife, vnder the pꝛe-
tence of relygyon: for yf he so
doo, he ought to be excommu-
nycate, and yf he continue to be
deposed. Saynt Augustine al-
so, a man not Ignoraunt of ho-
lye dyscretyon, sayth: There is
none so greuous an euil but it
is to be admytted to eschewe þe
woꝛse. We reade also in the se-
conde

conde booke of Trypartita his-
torys Canon dyscuc. xvi. Capi-
tulo Si quis. that when þ cou-
sell of Nycce, wolde haue esta-
blysshede þ selue same decrees,
that Bysshoppes, Byestes and
deacons, after theyr fyrst con-
secratyon shuld vtterlie abstai-
ne from theyr proper wyues,
or shuld put of theyr degree.

Macrinus rising in the mid-
dest of them, (one of those mar-
tyrs which Maximus þ Em-
perour) (theyr ryght eies beig
plucked oute, and theyr lyft leg-
ges cutt of) did cōdemne, spake
agaynst it: confessyng mariage
to be honourable, and affyrmyng
chastitie to be the lyuing with
a mans proper wyfe. And per-
suaded the counsell, that they
shulde make no soche lawes, af-
fyrmyng þ cause to be greuous,
ande myght be vnto thē or vnto
to theyr wyues an occasyon of
foze

fornication. And this did Paphnutius expresse (albeſt he was vnmarryed) And the counsell praysed his opinion or sentence, and decreed nothyng of that parte, but left that in euery mannes wyll, and of no necessitye. There are somme that take. S. Gregory to be an helpe vnto their secte. At whose temeritie I laughe, ande doo lament theyr Ignoraunce, for why? They are Ignorant that the decree of this so perillous & heresye, made by. S. Gregory was afterwarde, with worthy frute of repentaunce, purged by the same: for vppon a certeyne daye when he had cast his net into hys pōde or stewe for fish, and sawe aboue syr thorsande infants heades to be drawē vp, he (taken with inwarde repentaunce) lamented, and confessyng the decree that was made

De

de by hym self, for absteynyng
from matrymonye to be a cau-
se of so great a murther: pur-
ged the same (as I haue sayde)
wyth the frutes of worthy re-
pentaunce. And hys owne de-
cree vtterlye condemned, he
sayde that sayinge of the Apos-
tell. Better it is to Mary, ther-
to burne. Addyng for his ow-
ne parte, Better it is to Mary
then to gyue an occasyon of de-
ath. Thys chaunce, peraduentu-
re if they had redde wyth me
(I thynke) they wolde not ha-
ue Judged so rashlye: at the
least fearyng the precept of
GOD. Judge ye not, that you
be not Judged and of that Pau-
le sayth, What arte thou that
thou doeste Judge an other
mannes seruaunt: Unto hys
Lorde he standeth or falleth: &
truly he shall stande, the Lorde
is myghtie or able to ordeyne

or dyspose hym. Let therfore
your holynes cease to condempne
those, whome you ought or
nelie to admonish or counsell: le-
ast by a priuate precept (which
God forbode) you be founde
contrarie as well vnto þe newe
Testament, as vnto the olde.
For as. S. Augustine saith vn-
to Donatus, this onelye do we
feare in your Justice, Least not
for the consideration of Chris-
tyn lenitie or gentelues: But
for the greatnes of the mysche-
fe it selfe, you suppose it mete
to be restrained: þe which thing,
for Chrystes sake, we desyre
you hertelye not to doo: for
why? Sinnes are to be suppres-
sed, þe those maye remaine, that
may be repentaunt. And þe saying
of. S. Augustyne, we wyll
you also to remembre, where
he sayth: Let nothyng be done
for the desyre to do harme: and
all

all thynges wyth Charytie to
geue Consell, lett nothinge be
done cruellye, nothing vngent-
lie. Also of þe same I doo exhort
you in the feare of Chryste, all
you that haue not Temporall
thynges, couet not to haue the.
Ande all youe that haue them,
pzeume not in them. I save
not, yf you haue them that you
are condēpned; but if you pze-
sume in them, you are condēp-
ned. Yf you seme vnto your sel-
ues for soche thynges to be mē-
ne of great aucthoritie. Yf for
youre excellent vnytie, you for-
gett the commune condycion
of mankinde. The which cuppe
of discretion cruelye, ye maye
drawe oute of that Apollolyke
fountayne. Arte thou vnloosed
fro a wyfe, will not to seke for
a wyfe. Arte thou bounde vnto
a wyfe, will not to seke to be vn-
loosed. Where afterwarde it fol-
loweth,

loweth . Those that haue
wyues ought to be as though
they had none. Ande those that
vse the woorld, as though they
vsted it not. Also he speaketh
of the wyrdowe : Let hyr ma-
ry whome she wyll, onelye in
the **LORDE**. For truly to
mary in the Lord, is to attēpt
nothyng in the makynge of the
Marriage, that the Lord doth
forbydde. Hieronime also sayth:
Trust youe not in wordes of
lynges: Sayinge, the Temple
of the **LORDE**, the Temple
of the Lord, & Temple of the
LORDE is, the which thing,
Hierome expoundynge, sayth:
The same also maye agree vnto
these Virgynes, & craue of
theyr Virginyte, wyth an vn-
chaste countenaunce, they
sette forth theyr Chastity, whē
theyr Conscience meaneth an
other thyng. And they forgett
the

the Definition of the Apostell
of a Virgin: That she ought to
be Holy in Body and Spittle.
What profiteth þ chastnes of
the Bodye, when the mynde is
oppressed wyth whozedome?
And if she haue not other Ver-
tues, that the wordes of the
Prophet doth describer. The
whyche truelye because we see
you partly to haue, and becau-
se it is not vnknoen vnto vs,
that your Dylcretion (albeit
in this it be negligēt) in other
Institutions of youre lyfe, the
same is preserved. We dispayr
not, but that you will sone cor-
rect þ euell faulte of this intē.
And therfor we do not taunte
this youre negligēce (albeit it
be very greuous) w so great a
gravity, as we may do. And (al-
though truly vnto þ termes þ
are vled) a bisskop shuld appere
to be greter þn a priest: yet sup-
b ii pose

pose we not, Augustyne to be
lesse then Hierome. And a cor-
rection or a checke is not to be
refused or disdained of eueri i-
ferpoure, specially wheare as
he that is checked, is founde to
trauaple agaynst the trouth,
ande to please men. Nor yet
we ought to take the Dysputa-
cions of eueri Parson (as S.
Augustyne sayth to Bonifaci-
us) although they be neuer so
CATHOLIKE, ande well
prayed menne. As we do the
Canonicall Scriptures: Al-
bett, it be not lafull (saunge
þ Honor that is due vnto the)
to dysproue ande refuse anye
thyng in theyr wytyng: If
perchance we fynde that they
Iudge othere wyle then the
trueth is: The whiche by the
healpe of **GOD**, is eyther per-
ceyued by other, or by vs. And
truely what can be moze con-
trarie

straye vnto the Veritye, the
thys: When the Verity itseife
sprakynge of the contynenye,
not of one man, but playnelye
of all (except þe nombze of soche
as are pꝛofessed to continency)
sayth: He that can take it, take
yt, the whyche thyng these
menne (wherof no Man knoweth)
beyng pꝛouoked or
pꝛycked to it, maye chaunce to
saye, he that cā take it, let hym
be stryken wyth a curse. What
trulye can be done by mē moze
foolphe: What can be moze
boud vnto the curse of GOD:
Than where as some, that is
to saye: Eytber Byschoppes
or DEACONS, are comynge
so headlonge into the Lustes
of the Bodye: That they can
neyther abhorre Adulterye,
nor inceste frome the mooste
Shamefulle Embzacyng of
the male kynde (the mooze

shame) and yet they saye, þe chaste
te Maryage of Pryestes shyn-
ke vnto them: and wyll not de-
syre the Pryestes as fellow ser-
uauntes to absteyne from soe
che thynges, by the compassy-
on of ryght Justyce, or at the
leaste monysh them to be con-
tynent: but commande them,
as though they were seruaun-
tes, ande compell them to ab-
stayne. Vnto the whych so
foolysh ande shamefull suggesti-
tyons of soche Imperie (I will
not saye counsell) they adde,
it is moze honeste to be inty-
cate secretlye wyth many wo-
men, then openly in the face
of men and in conscience to be
bound wyth one. Ande what
trulpe wolde they not saye: yf
they were of hym ande in hym
that sayth, woobe vnto yow
Phariseys, the whych do all
thynges for men. Ande by the
Psal:

Scalmyt, because they please
menne, they are confounded:
for as moche as the Lord hath
dyspyled them. These be the
men whych shuld fyrst persua-
de vs, that in hys syght (vnto
whome all thynges are naked
and open) we ought to be a sha-
med to be synners, rather then
in the syght of menne, to appe-
re to be without spotte. Albeit
therfore that soche through þe
desertes of theyr noughtynes,
deserue counsell of no pitie. we
notwithstandyng remembryng
our humanitie, do minister vnto
to them, the counsell of Goddes
Auctoritie, þe neuer wanteth pi-
tie, from þe bowelles of Chary-
tie. For tralpe this we saie: O
þe ypocrit, cast oute first a block
oute of thi owne eie, & the shalt
þe see, to cast out a moate oute
of thy brothers eie. And we de-
spyre them also to note, þe thinge

that the Lorde sayth of the comone woman. Looke which of you is without synne, let hym cast fyrst the stone vppon hym. As who wolde saye, yf the lawe doth commaunde it: yf Moyses do commaunde it: I commaunde it also. But I requyre mete or competent mynysters of the lawe. Note well what you adde: ande marke well (I praye you) what you are: for if thou loke well vppon thy selfe (as scripture sayth) thou wylt neuer sclander any man. It is also signyfied vnto vs, of certen, of those, the which swell wyth so moche pryde in theyr owne conceyte, that they presume to pylle the flocke of the lorde, (for whome Gods shepheardes doubte not to mynyster or gyue theyr soules) wyth stryppes wythout reason. Whose sentence. S. Gregoꝝ lamenting, sayth:

saith: What shall become of the
shepe, when the Shepherdes
are made wolues? But who is
soner ouercome, the he that ra-
geth: Who shall Iudge the per-
secuter, but he that doth minis-
ter paryentlie hys backe to the
whippes? Trulie it weare well
done, that it myght be hearde,
for what frute the Church of
GOD shulde suffer so great a
sclaunder, & the clergie so great
a despyte of the Bysshoppes, and
of theyr infidelles. And verlie
I doubt not, to call those infi-
del'es, of whome the Apostell
Paul sayth vnto Timothe, &
in the latter dayes, some shall
go awaye from the faith, geu-
ing care vnto the spytyes of er-
roure, and vnto the doctryne of
Deuelles, speaking lies in ypo-
crysye, hauyng a fyled consci-
ence, forbyddyng to marry.

Thys trulpe if it be throughe
and

and dyligently seen, is the hād
full of all theyꝝ cockell, and the
content of all theyꝝ madnes,
that whyles clerkes or Wyres-
tes, (beyng overcome wyth a
Pharisyall furour) are com-
pelled to forsake the lausfull co-
panye of one woman, fornyca-
tors, adulterers & the shame-
full mynisters of other Wau-
ties, are made lyke wyth the.
These be they that doo byng
into the Church (lyke the blyn-
de that leadeth the blynde) this
heresye, that the saying of the
Psalmyst maye be fulfilled:
Where lyke one for knowyng
of theyꝝ errour, he curseth the
after this sorte. Let theyꝝ eyes
be dymed or bleared that they
see not, and theyꝝ bakke alwa-
yes bowed downe. For as mo-
che therfore as no mā (O Apo-
stolyk Father) that knoweth
you, is so Ignorant, but yf you
had

had foreseen, by the clearenes
of your substancyall dyscreti-
on, so great a plage to be lyke
to growe, thzough the sentence
of your decree: you would ne-
uer haue consented vnto so e-
uell suggestyons of any maner
of parliā. wherfore by the fy-
delitye of pure due subiection,
we counsell you: that now we at
the least you laye watche, to
putte a waie so great a sclau-
der from the Church of God.

And by your learnyng (as you
knowe howe) to plucke vp by
the rootes oute of the hearde
of God: the doctryne of y^e Pha-
riseys: Least the onely dear-
ling of the lozde (yf she vse any
longer vnttrue husbādes) pluc-
ke a waie the holie nation, the
p^ryncelye p^resthoade by a de-
uorle, that cannot be recoue-
red againe, from hy^r dere spous-
se: that is to saye. **CHRIST.**

Foras

For as moch as no mā without
chasttye (not onelye in the flo-
wer of byrgnytye, but also in
the knot of Matrymony) can
see the Lorde, the whych ly-
ueth and reygneith, wyth
God the father, and the
holyghoost worlde
wythout ende
Amen.

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